

By Harry Rositzke

THE NEWEST Washington game concerns the problem of what to do with the Central Intelligence Agency. With the White House and two congressional committees planning reforms, the capital is afloat with proposals. The favorite formulas revolve around executive control, congressional oversight—and organizational overhaul. And as is so often the case in the capital, reorganizing and improving are equated.

The most drastic proposition, and the simplest, is—"Abolish the CIA." Or put more dramatically, "Get rid of the CIA altogether, lock, stock and burglar's kit." The President can walk into its Langley headquarters and announce, "Boys, the jig is up. It's all over. Get out of here."

The weakest suggestions are cosmetic ones:

Rename it—say, into the Foreign Intelligence Agency. Discarding the tarnished initials will supposedly remove the tarnish and presumably provide an added psychological assurance that the agency will refrain from activities within the United States. But "FIA" is as good a target as "CIA" both at home and abroad in the unlikely event that it will replace the richly loaded "CIA" in the vocabulary of critics and propagandists. The shift might even be cited as just another example of "CIA deception."

If acronymic dexterity solves nothing, a "clean sweep of its present leadership" will give the agency nothing but a temporary face-lift. A new director, a new charter, a new and more effective Congressional oversight committee do not begin to solve the substantive problems raised in the current debates. Is the charter at fault—or the White House? Who is an ideal director—George Bush? To what extent can Congress supervise secret operations—even if it really wants to?

THOSE CRITICS who consider all or part of CIA's work essential to the national interest—and they are in the great majority—seek the solution in a reorganization of the agency. Their focus in my view is fixed on the right target, for the CIA is a unique organizational maverick in the world of Western intelligence—a large-scale roof organization lumping together several quite disparate sets of intelligence activities.

There are essentially five slices of the CIA pie that can be detached, discarded, or passed around to other

Revamping CIA:

Easier Said Than

THE WASHINGTON POST Sunday, Jan. 18, 1976 F3

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agencies in Washington. Some are more tightly glued together than others.

—The overt collection of information from satellites, foreign radio broadcasts, foreign press and periodicals, private American citizens and companies. These are innocuous and non-controversial "services of common concern" to Washington's intelligence community.

—Intelligence research and analysis, ranging from current intelligence dailies to the composition of national estimates.

—Espionage and counterespionage, mainly through the use of secret agents.

—Covert political action operations.

—Paramilitary operations.

These five functions fall organizationally into two superficially neat segments: the open analytic mission in the directorates of Intelligence and Scientific-Technical; the secret operations mission in the Operations Directorate. These are, and have been since 1947, the "two sides of the house" in the agency.

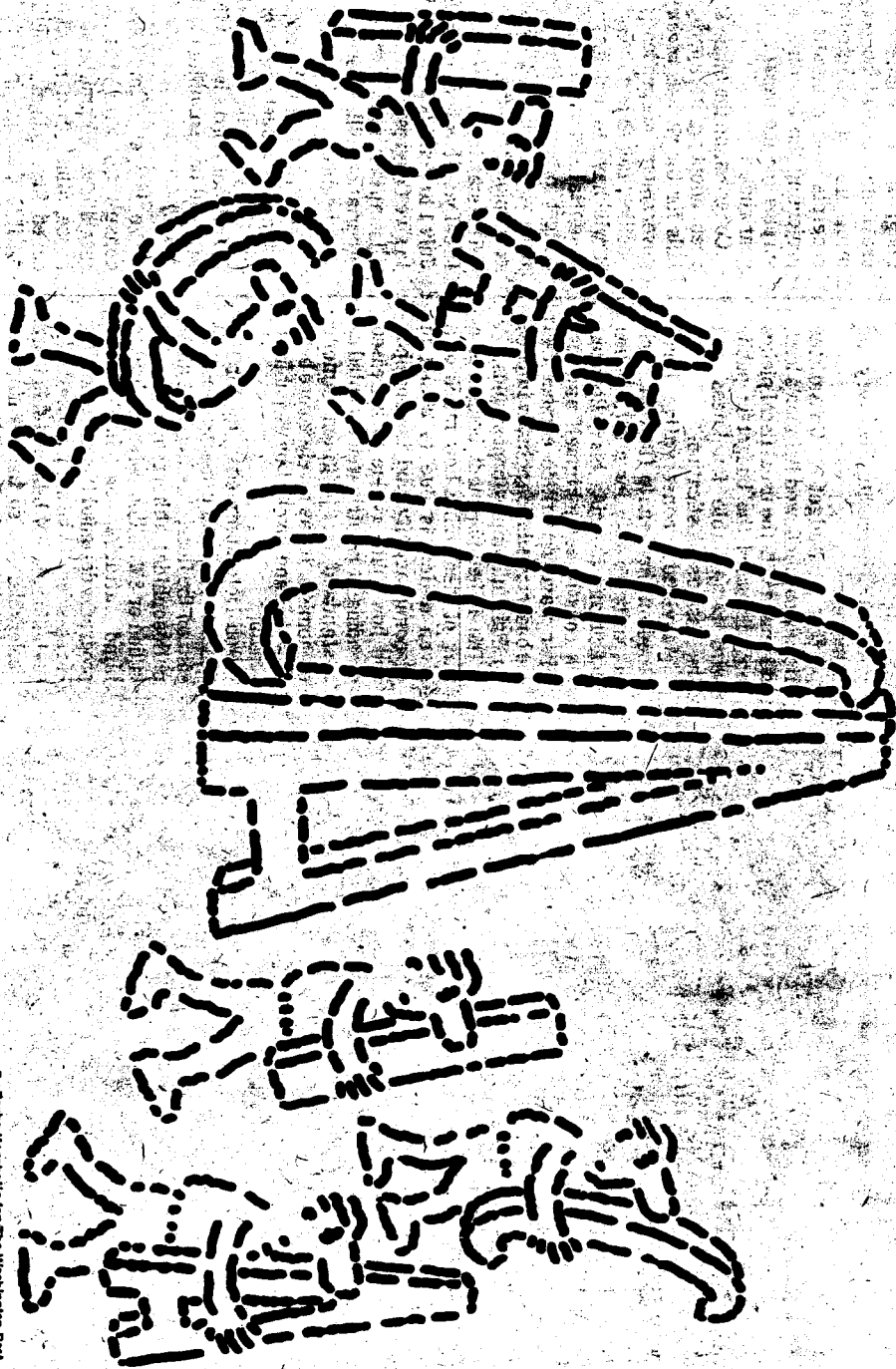
The most obvious counsel would be to pull apart the two sides, most easily accomplished by taking secret operations out of CIA and confining the agency to its central function of providing overall intelligence estimates to the President. The CIA would then become the agency that, some observers note, the Congress thought it was setting up in 1947. In the process the "professors" would be separated from the "spies," the thinkers from the "thugs." Freed from the contamination of the dirty tricksters, the CIA would become a respectable braintrust, regain the public confidence and allay the fears of Congress.

What would be done with secret operations?

Either wipe them out ("give up the sport"), transfer them to another Washington agency, or break them off as an autonomous secret service.

These are tempting suggestions, but each offers practical problems in its execution.

To destroy the present intelligence service because "it has had its cover blown" (whatever that might mean)



by Zaria Karabalic for The Washington Post

and to start a new, smaller, less obtrusive service from scratch can only result in the loss of hundreds of foreign agents, scores of effective working relationships with other intelligence services and five years on a new start. As this country learned in the late '40s, "It takes many years to develop a good spook-factory."

BE IT THE old service, or a new one, for whom would it work? There are two logical alternatives: the secretary of state or the President. If the legislative authority for all secret operations is given to the secretary of state, will the diplomats be any happier than the intelligence analysts in cohabiting with the secret operators? Will "State" replace "CIA" as the sinister arm of American diplomacy? Doesn't Dr. Kissinger have his hands full without taking on Washington's most controversial football?

Assigning secret operations to the White House makes more sense. The German and French services work directly out of the Executive's front office. They take their orders without an intermediary "director." They are his service and are allowed to operate under his executive privilege. Their scandals are his scandals. But their daily business is also his own.

Can it work in Washington? The problem is actually much more intricate than simply detaching the Operations Directorate and putting it somewhere outside the CIA. In the last 30 years it has become an integral and integrated part of the CIA's overall structure. Most of the Support Directorate is devoted to backing the secret operators, not only with its personnel, finance and logistics units but with the CIA's first-rate global communications network. The Scientific Directorate now does the research and development on the technical equipment used by the operators. If the operators and their administrative support structure were taken out of Langley headquarters, the "Agency" would barely fill its first two floors.

On bureaucratic balance—and bureaucratic facts cannot be shoved aside—there would be more sense in extracting the intelligence side of the house out of CIA and have it take along the modest support structure it would require. This service could sensibly be appended to the White

House which it now serves as the top intelligence body in Washington reporting directly to the President through his National Security Adviser or acting as the intelligence arm of the National Security Council. It should not, as some have urged, be made subordinate to the secretary of state (or of defense) for its only claim to existence as an independent estimator unaffected by diplomatic policies or military budget interests. In this scenario the operations unit, undeceptively renamed the American Intelligence Service, could work under a chief directly responsible to the President.

These proposals are complicated enough, but less complicated than those for pulling apart the three slices within the Operations Directorate. The strongest congressional and public pleas have been for a separation of the espionage-counterespionage function from the covert action function. That there is a "dichotomy" between espionage and action operations, no one will deny. Again, the easiest solution is to wipe out covert action, but those who want to retain an American action capability and yet achieve a "proper division of labor" face an insoluble problem in separating political action operations from espionage.

Placing action operations in a separate agency has been tried before—from 1948 to 1952 in the Office

of Policy Coordination. The result was confusion, duplication and insecurity. The intelligence and action operators would compete, as they did then, for the same foreign agents and for collaboration with the same foreign intelligence agencies. There would be two American "secret services" available for penetration of Soviet or Cuban intelligence. Above all, the strictly covert action operators would be compelled to fight continually for covert action projects just to stay in business—and at a time when the prejudice runs high against action projects.

As a matter of practical fact, there is no separate transferable "department" in the Operations Directorate that carries out political action operations. There are not two cadres of operations officers overseas—one for espionage, one for political action. The case-officer getting secret reports from a political

leader is the same man who, on instruction, will discuss his agent's political plans and, on instruction, will pass funds to assist his career or his party's prospects. An agent, low-level or high-level, has but one case-officer, and all CIA business is transacted between the two—in Chile, Portugal or Zaire.

No clear line can be drawn between the collection of political intelligence and political action. The best informed agents are normally influential men in their own societies. Even an intelligence officer does not passively accept information supplied by an influential agent. Their conversations can range from local diplomatic issues to the Soviet-Chinese nexus. Through these contacts the intelligence agent is already an "agent of influence," for his bias is inevitably pro-American. The shift from this function to that of an active political action agent becomes one of degree—from accepting advice to accepting money for carrying out an agreed course of action of mutual interest.

A knowledgeable intelligence operator, sure-footed on the local political scene, with a clear perception of "his man's" political ability and future prospects, is also the ideal contact for handling an action agent. Passing money can be kept as secret as receiving information.

With no political action apparatus to cut out or transfer, continuing to

assign the action task to the intelligence operators has one added advantage. If there is to be no covert American action in the future, no one will be unemployed. If there will be, no extras are needed.

THE PARAMILITARY slice of CIA operations, on the other hand, is eminently detachable. Its personnel are specialists—parachute trainers, combat instructors, sabotage experts, etc.—having little to do with the handling of secret agents. Its logistics demand the creation of air proprietary companies, secret dumps, the hiring of foreign crews

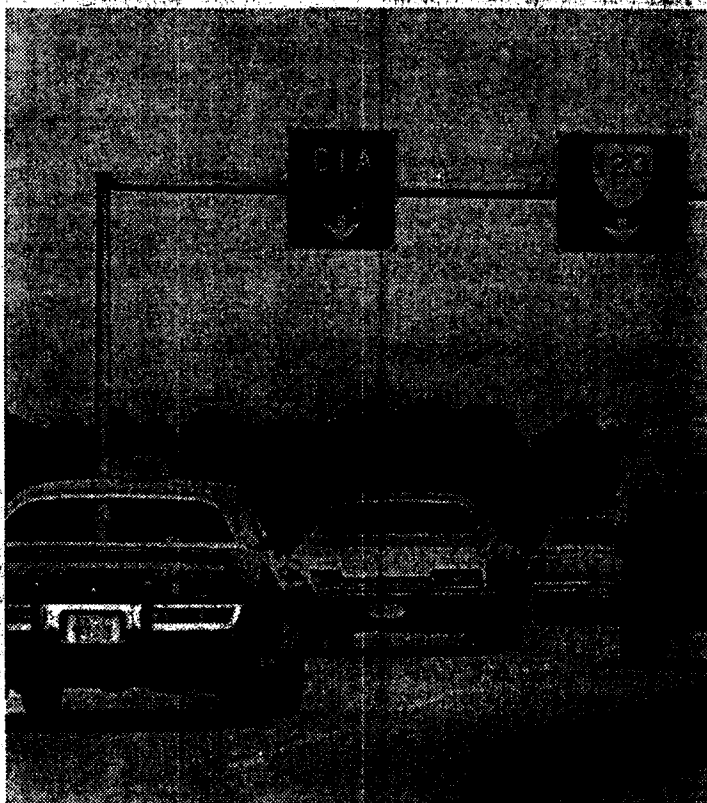
and large outdoor training sites. It involves the most extensive and expensive overhead of any covert operations—when it is the job of a civilian agency. It clearly belongs with the military.

Paramilitary operations have been the least productive instrument of American covert action. Communist-controlled terrain proved to be immune to resistance operations—in Poland, Albania, North Korea, northern China, North Vietnam. The support of the anti-Sukarno rebels in Indonesia and the invasion of Cuba ended in disaster. Even the "successful" invasion of Guatemala and the covert support of U.N. forces in the Congo had equivocal long-term benefits.

Now the President's covert arm has again been used to furnish arms to two factions fighting the Soviet-supported MPLA in Angola. No secret training, secret arms dumps, or black air flights involved—only the movement of materiel to and through Zaire. Even discounting the practical and political issues the basic policy question recurs: was the use of the covert instrument essential or even desirable?

The personnel and equipment which have flowed into Luanda to support the MPLA were not ferried in under the auspices of the KGB, but by Soviet and Cuban ships and airplanes. Moscow openly supplied military aid to support a "national liberation movement" that has become a government recognized by many African states. There has been a straightforward military intervention by official invitation of a government in power—like the American interventions in Lebanon, South Vietnam, and Laos.

With Zaire always available as a convenient intermediary, why did we not respond in kind by the open delivery of arms to "our side?" It must have been perfectly clear to the President and his advisers that the large-scale delivery of equipment to Zaire-Angola could not be kept secret. Why then use CIA to "cover" an effort



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that was bound to become public? Why make "plausible denial" so ridiculous?

There can be only one explanation, as in Cuba and Laos. The President and the secretary of state were concerned that the Congress would not agree with their Angolan policy and would not supply the required funds. Secret funds provided the easy way out. The use of covert action, not to achieve a foreign purpose in secret, but to evade Congressional scrutiny, degrades the covert instrument into a domestic political tool.

Taking paramilitary operations out of the CIA and placing them where they belong—in the Department of Defense—would achieve two clear purposes. The Congress would be placed directly within the decision-making process for paramilitary as well as military operations abroad, and the burden of proof that covert rather than open action is required would rest with the President. The Operations Directorate would be reduced to a secret service—and it is about time the United States had one.

Rositzke, who retired from the CIA in 1970, now writes on intelligence and foreign policy.